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ABSTRACT

In 1990 a study was conducted whose purpose was to establish empirically the degree to which governance of each state community college system was centralized or decentralized. This data would provide information on which to base decisions for changing governance structures. The 1990 study was replicated in 1997. A 100% response rate was obtained from the 49 state (South Dakota does not have a community college system) and Puerto Rico community college system directors. In 1990, 45.5% of state community college system governance structures were assessed as being centralized, while 54.5% were assessed as being decentralized. In 1997, 50% of state systems were centralized and 50% decentralized. Three (7%) state systems reported that they had been in existence for 15 or fewer years, while 13 systems (32%) had been in existence 36 or more years. The average proportion of local funding was 19.11%. Local funding proportions ranged from 18 states with 0%, to Illinois, which had 60% local funding. Researchers found that public estimates of community college costs were five times the actual cost: average public cost estimates were $6,275, compared to actual average costs of $1,194. Each state offers a report that includes an overview, governance, funding, economic development, programs and enrollments, and accountability. (NB)

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